

# Pathway to Engagement Program

February 2008

## *Sanction Caseload:*

*In January 2008, 1,103 WorkFirst cases were in sanction. This is 4% of TANF cases with an adult who is required to participate.*

## *Of these sanctioned cases:*

- *616 cases were in the first or second month of sanction (2.1% of adult TANF cases)*
- *570 cases had been in sanction for three or more months (1.9% of adult TANF cases)*

A WorkFirst sanction is a penalty that applies when a parent in the family is able but unwilling to participate in required WorkFirst activities. If a parent cannot show good cause for not participating in WorkFirst, the department will place them in sanction and reduce the family's grant by 40% or the adult's share, whichever is greater.

Under the Non-Compliance Sanction (NCS) policy, parents who refuse to participate for six months in a row face termination of their cash grant. Families who are terminated can reapply immediately, but must participate for four consecutive weeks before they are approved for cash.

## **What is the Pathway to Engagement Program?**

The Pathway to Engagement program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) through contracts with more than 30 Community-Based Organizations statewide that provide direct services to families. Contractors provide services to sanctioned WorkFirst families, including:

### ***Pre-Termination Services***

Pre-termination services are available to parents in months 4 through 6 of sanction. Community-based organizations (CBOs) work with parents to develop an Exit Plan that will help ready them to begin supporting themselves and their family without a monthly cash grant. Parents who want to begin participating in WorkFirst are re-connected with their case manager to begin the process of re-engagement.

### ***Post-Termination Services***

Post-termination services are provided to families who have lost cash assistance as a result of a Non-Compliance Sanction. The goal is to promote family stability and child safety through home visits and referrals to community resources.

For Post-Termination Services, contractors conduct an in-person interview within 60 days of WorkFirst termination to assist in developing an Exit Plan. If the family received Pre-Termination services, contractors work with them to help implement the previously prepared Exit Plan. Contractors also provide each family with necessary referrals and linkages to available community resources, and help parents who wish to re-engage in WorkFirst with re-applying to the program.

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For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit [www.workfirst.wa.gov](http://www.workfirst.wa.gov)